

Living In Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.), Inc.

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# Agency Policies & Procedures Manual

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The contents of this Policies and Procedures Manual are provided to employees of Living In Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.), Inc. for informational purposes only. While the agency offers and seeks to apply the plans, policies, and procedures described herein, they are never to be considered conditions of employment in and of themselves. Instead, it is important to understand that all employees of this agency are to be considered employees-at-will. This means that employment can be discontinued at any time, with or without notice or cause, for any reason. This provision is necessary due to the fact that our programs are completely dependent upon government funding, which could change at any time. In the event it becomes necessary to make adjustments in the level of services and supports provided within any program or to reorganize those supports, it is necessary for the agency to reserve the right to do so immediately. By the same accord, employees are always free to end their employment status with the agency at any time without providing notice. The agency reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, terminate, or change any or all plans, policies, or procedures in whole or in part, at any time with or without notice in compliance with applicable laws. The agency does not utilize employment contracts in any form and this Policies and Procedures Manual, or any language used herein, is not intended to create a guarantee of employment. No management official is authorized to make any oral assurance or promise of continued employment.

Additionally, as an employee of this agency, you must clearly understand that there is always a possibility that you may be occasionally required to work a schedule that differs from the stated days or hours of your initial assignment. This change may be temporary or long-term, based on the needs of the program you work in, or the needs of the agency as a whole. By becoming an employee of Living In Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.), Inc., you have joined a team of committed professionals whose primary goal is to work together to provide the finest possible level of support to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

We sincerely hope that your association with the agency will be an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

## Policy

It is the policy of Living In Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.), Inc. that the organization will maintain a current Policies and Procedures Manual in either written or digital form. This manual will contain any and all policies that are written to provide the basic structure and guiding principles by which the organization will operate. Naturally, a policy and procedure cannot be written for every minute detail or event that may occur, but rather, are intended to cover in more general terms, the most significant events that have been identified as beneficial to be addressed in policy and procedure fashion.

The Policy and Procedures Manual will be altered, added to, and adjusted whenever the need arises. A complete and thorough review will be conducted at least annually. Any significant alterations and additions will be communicated to all involved personnel when changes occur.

## Statement of Our Core Values

### Agency Vision

*We are committed to being an innovative and creative leader in supported resources:*

- *To continue educating ourselves*
- *To ensure satisfaction of participants by listening and participating in open, honest communication*
- *To promote equality as well as quality of life through freedom of choice and self- advocacy*
- *To encourage growth and accept change, not only in the individuals we support but also within ourselves and our ideas*
- *Our Policies and Procedures shall reflect ethical practices for marketing, admission, transfer and billing relative to services provided*
- *Care and Support shall be rendered without regard and/or consideration of an individual's financial resources*

## Statement of Our Principles

### Value Statement

*Commitment and follow through are essential practices in our organization. Our belief in what we do is demonstrated by our dedication and loyalty to agency goals and objectives. In order to pro-actively provide quality supports and maintain a positive, professional reputation in the community, an organization must be comprised of committed professionals who understand the importance of adhering to ethical standards and display respect for all other members of the organization.*

*As a progressive, committed agency, we ambitiously pursue quality individualized supports focusing on a person-centered approach. Our commitment to supporting individuals holistically, educating the community and teaching self-advocacy enhances our positive reputation in the community. L.I.F.E. Inc. provides an organizational value of mutual respect for all by exercising equality, professional commitment, fairness and acceptance of individuals for who they are.*

### Mission Statement

*Living In Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.), Inc. works to provide a person-centered supportive environment for individuals with disabilities through:*

- *Informed Choice Making*
- *Self-Advocacy*
- *Life Skill Development*
- *Relationship Building*
- *Community Participation*
- *Creating Personal Goals*
- *Developing Independence*
- *Developing a Positive Self-Image*

### Building Trust & Credibility

*The success of our agency is dependent on the trust and confidence we earn from our employees, participants, families, and community supporters. We gain credibility by adhering to our commitments, displaying honesty and integrity and reaching company goals solely through honorable conduct. It is easy to say what we must do, but the proof is in our actions. Ultimately, we will be judged on what we do.*

*When considering any action, it is wise to ask: will this build trust and credibility for the agency? Will it help create a working environment in which the agency can succeed over the long term? Is the commitment we are making one that we can follow through with? The only way we will maximize trust and credibility is by answering "yes" to these questions and by working everyday to build our trust and credibility.*

## Statement of Our Principles

### Respecting the Participants

*We all deserve to work in an environment where we are treated with dignity and respect. L.I.F.E., Inc. is committed to creating such an environment because it brings out the full potential in each of us, which, in turn, contributes directly to our business success. We cannot afford to let anyone's talents go to waste. Staff shall use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about those served. Staff is prohibited from engaging in or promising to engage in a personal, scientific, financial, or any other relationship with participants outside of the professional relationship. Staff shall not take advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others for their personal, religious, financial, sexual, political, or business interests. At all times, staff shall respect the confidentiality of each person served.*

*The agency is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action employer and provider that is committed to providing environments that are free of discrimination from abusive, offensive, or harassing behavior. Any person who feels harassed or discriminated against should report the incident to their manager or the Human Resources Department.*

### Creating a Culture of Open and Honest Communication

*At L.I.F.E., Inc., everyone should feel comfortable to speak their mind, particularly with respect to ethics concerns. Managers have a responsibility to create an open and supportive environment where employees feel comfortable raising such questions. We all benefit tremendously when employees exercise their power to prevent mistakes or wrongdoing by asking the right questions at the right times.*

*L.I.F.E., Inc. will investigate all reported instances of questionable or unethical behavior. In every instance where improper behavior is found to have occurred, the agency will take appropriate action. We will not tolerate retaliation against employees who raise genuine ethics concerns in good faith - known as whistle-blowing.*

### Whistle-blower Policy

*A whistle-blower as defined by this policy is an employee of L.I.F.E., Inc. who reports an activity that they consider to be illegal or dishonest to one or more of the parties specified within. The whistle-blower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures - appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities.*

*Examples of illegal or dishonest activities are violations of federal, state or local laws, billing for services not performed or for goods not delivered, or fraudulent financial reporting such as a misuse of agency or client funds.*

*If an employee has knowledge of or a concern of illegal, dishonest, or fraudulent activity, the employee is to contact their immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Department. The employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.*

*Whistle-blower protections are provided in two important areas - confidentiality and retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistle-blower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law, and to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense. The agency will not retaliate against a whistle-blower for reporting legitimately potential or actual violations. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments and threats of physical harm. Any whistle-blower who believes they are being retaliated against must contact the Human Resources Department immediately. The right of a whistle-blower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal action they may have committed in violation of this ethics policy.*

## Statement of Our Principles

*All reports of illegal and dishonest activities will be promptly submitted to the administrator of Human Resources who is responsible for investigating and coordinating corrective action.*

*Employees with any questions regarding this policy should contact the administrator of Human Resources. Employees are encouraged, in the first instance, to address such issues with their manager or the Human Resources Department as most problems can be resolved swiftly. If for any reason that is not possible or if an employee is not comfortable raising the issue with their manager or with Human Resources, L.I.F.E., Inc.'s executive administration does operate with an open-door policy.*

### Setting the Tone at the Top

*Management has the added responsibility for demonstrating, through their actions, the importance of this ethical code. In any business, ethical behavior does not simply happen - it is the product of clear and direct communication of behavioral expectations, modeled from the top and demonstrated by example. Again, ultimately, our actions are what matters.*

*To make this code effective, managers must be responsible for promptly addressing ethical questions or concerns raised by employees and for taking the appropriate steps to deal with such issues. Managers should not consider an employee's ethics concern as a threat or challenge to their authority, but rather as another encouraged form of business communication. At L.I.F.E., Inc., we want the ethics dialogue to become a natural part of daily work.*

### Upholding the Law

*The agency's commitment to integrity begins with complying with laws, rules and regulations of the State of Rhode Island and the federal government. Further, each of us must have an understanding of agency policies, laws, rules, and regulations that apply to our specific roles. If we are unsure of whether a contemplated action is permitted by law or agency policy, we should seek the advice from administration. We are responsible for preventing violations of law and for speaking up if we see possible violations.*

### Health & Safety

*L.I.F.E., Inc. is dedicated to maintaining a healthy and safe environment. A safety committee has been established to review and provide recommendations on safety in the workplace. They represent all segments of our agency and by doing their important work, attempt to be helpful in avoiding injuries, accidents, and other potentially serious situations which would otherwise place employees in harm's way.*

### Conflicts of Interest

*We must avoid any relationship or activity that might impair, or even appear to impair, our ability to make objective and fair decisions when performing our jobs. At times, we may be faced with situations where the actions we take on behalf of the agency may conflict with our own personal or family interests because of the course of actions that is best for us personally may not also be the best course of action for L.I.F.E., Inc. We owe a duty to L.I.F.E., Inc. to advance its legitimate interests when the opportunity to do so arises. We must never use agency property or information for personal gain or personally take for ourselves any opportunity that is discovered through our position.*

*Here are some other ways in which conflicts of interest could arise:*

- *Owning or having a substantial interest in a supplier or contractor used by the agency and expecting special treatment*
- *Having a personal interest, financial interest, or potential gain in any L.I.F.E., Inc. transaction*
- *Placing agency business with a firm owned or controlled by a L.I.F.E., Inc. employee or their family, without utilizing the competitive bidding process*

*Determining whether a conflict of interest exists is not always easy to do. Employees with a conflict of interest*



## Statement of Our Principles

*question should seek advice from management. Before engaging in any activity, transaction or relationship that might give rise to a conflict of interest, employees must seek review from their manager or the Human Resources Department.*

### Accepting Business Courtesies

*Employees who award contracts or who can influence the allocation of business, who create specifications that result in the placement of business or who participate in negotiation of contracts must be particularly careful to avoid actions that create the appearance of favoritism or that may adversely affect the company's reputation for impartiality and fair dealing. The prudent course is to refuse a courtesy from a supplier when L.I.F.E., Inc. is involved in choosing or reconfirming a supplier or under circumstances that would create an impression that offering courtesies is the way to obtain agency business.*

### Meals, Refreshments, and Entertainment

*We may accept occasional meals, refreshments, entertainment, and similar business courtesies that are shared with the person who has offered to pay for the meal or entertainment, provided that:*

- *They are not inappropriately lavish or excessive*
- *The courtesies are not frequent and do not reflect a pattern of frequent acceptance of courtesies from the same person or entity*
- *The courtesy does not create the appearance of an attempt to influence business decisions, such as accepting courtesies or entertainment from a supplier whose contract is expiring in the near future*
- *The employee accepting the business courtesy would not feel uncomfortable discussing the courtesy with his or her manager or coworker or having the courtesies known by the public*

### Gifts

*Employees may accept small unsolicited gifts, that conform to the reasonable ethical practices of the marketplace, including:*

- *Flowers, fruit baskets, and other modest presents that commemorate a special occasion*
- *Gifts of nominal value, such as calendars, pens, mugs, caps, t-shirts or other novelty and promotional items*

*Generally, employees may only accept compensation, honorarium, or money of any amount from entities with whom L.I.F.E., Inc. does or may do business with approval from management. Tangible gifts (including tickets to a sporting or entertainment event) that have a market value greater than \$100.00 may not be accepted unless approval is obtained from management.*

*Employees with questions about accepting business courtesies should talk to their manager or the Human Resources Department.*

### Offering Business Courtesies

*Other than to our government customers, for whom special rules apply, we may provide non-monetary gifts (i.e., company logo apparel or similar promotional items) to our customers. Further, management may approve other courtesies, including meals, refreshments or entertainment of reasonable value, provided that:*

- *The practice does not violate any law or regulation or the standards of conduct of the recipient's organization*
- *The business courtesy is consistent with industry practice, is infrequent in nature and is not lavish*
- *The business courtesy is properly reflected on the books and records of the agency*

## Statement of Our Principles

### Accurate Public Disclosures

*We will make certain that all disclosures made in financial reports and public documents are full, fair, accurate, timely, and understandable. This obligation applies to all employees, including all financial executives, with any responsibility for the preparation of such reports, including drafting, reviewing, and signing or certifying the information contained therein. No business goal of any kind is ever an excuse for misrepresenting facts or falsifying records.*

*Employees should inform executive administration and the Human Resources Department if they learn that information in any filing or public communication was untrue or misleading at the time it was made or if subsequent information would affect a similar future filing or public communication.*

### Corporate Record-keeping

*We create, retain and dispose of our company records as part of our normal course of business in compliance with all L.I.F.E., Inc. policies and guidelines, as well as all regulatory and legal requirements.*

*All corporate records must be true, accurate and complete, and company data must be promptly and accurately entered in our books in accordance with L.I.F.E., Inc.'s and other applicable accounting principles.*

*We must not improperly influence, manipulate, or mislead any unauthorized audit, nor interfere with any auditor engaged to perform an internal independent audit of agency books, records, processes, or internal controls.*

### Promoting Substance Over Form

*At times, we are all faced with decisions we would rather not have to make and issues we would prefer to avoid. Sometimes, we hope if we avoid confronting a problem, it will simply go away.*

*At L.I.F.E., Inc. we must have the courage to tackle the tough decisions and make difficult choices, secure in the knowledge that the agency is committed to doing the right thing. At times this will mean doing more than simply what the law requires. Merely because we can pursue a course of action does not mean we should do so.*

*Although L.I.F.E., Inc.'s guiding principles can not address every issue or provide answers to every dilemma, they can define the spirit in which we intend to do business and should guide us in our daily conduct.*

### Accountability

*Each of us is responsible for knowing and adhering to the values and standards set forth in this ethical code and for raising questions if we are uncertain about company policy. If we are concerned whether the standards are being met or are aware of violations of the code, we must contact the Human Resources Department.*

*The agency takes seriously the standards set forth in the code, and violations are cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.*

### Confidential & Proprietary Information

*Integral to L.I.F.E., Inc.'s business success is our protection of confidential company information, as well as nonpublic information entrusted to us by employees, customers and other business partners. Confidential and proprietary information includes such things as pricing and financial data, customer names and addresses, or nonpublic information about other companies, including current or potential supplier and vendors. We will not disclose confidential and nonpublic information*

## Statement of Our Principles

*without a valid business purpose and proper authorization.*

### Use of Agency Resources

*Agency resources, including time, material, equipment, and information are provided for business use. Nonetheless, occasional personal use is permissible as long as it does not affect job performance or cause a disruption to the workplace.*

*Employees and those who represent L.I.F.E., Inc. are trusted to behave responsibly and use good judgment to conserve agency resources. Managers are responsible for the resources assigned to their department and are empowered to resolve issues concerning their proper use.*

*Generally, we will not use agency equipment such as computers, copiers, and fax machines in the conduct of an outside business or in support of any religious, political, or other outside daily activity. We will not solicit contributions nor distribute non-work related materials during work hours without first obtaining administrative approval.*

*In order to protect the interests of the agency network and our fellow employees, L.I.F.E., Inc. reserves the right to monitor or review all data and information contained on an employee's company issued computer or electronic device, the use of the internet or agency's network. We will not tolerate the use of company resources to create, access, store, print, solicit, or send any materials that are harassing, threatening, abusive, sexually explicit, or otherwise offensive or inappropriate.*

*Questions about the proper use of company resources should be directed to the Human Resources Department.*

### Media Inquiries

*L.I.F.E., Inc. is a private, nonprofit agency in the community, and from time to time, employees may be approached by reporters and other members of the media. In order to ensure that we speak with one voice and provide accurate information about the agency, we should direct all media inquiries to administration. No one may issue a press release without first consulting with the Public Relations Department.*

### Doing the Right Thing

*Several key questions can help identify situations that may be unethical, inappropriate, or illegal. Ask yourself:*

- Does what I am doing comply with agency guiding principles, Code of Ethics, and agency policies?*
- Have I been asked to misrepresent information or deviate from normal procedure?*
- Would I feel comfortable describing my decision at a staff meeting?*
- How would it look if it made the headlines?*
- Am I being loyal to my family, my employer, and myself?*
- What would I tell my child to do?*
- Is this the right thing to do?*

### Information & Resources

*Executive Administrators: Larry & Mary Ann Wiedenhofer*  
*Director of Human Resources: Matthew Murphy*

L.I.F.E. Inc. wishes to treat all employees fairly and considerately. Unfortunately, in any grouping of people, disagreements and misunderstandings can occur and dissatisfaction may result. The agency desires to be made aware of problems when they initially occur, so that they might be resolved at the earliest possible time. In addition to more formal grievance procedures which are described later, the agency will maintain an open door policy. Employees are asked and will be encouraged by the administration, to utilize the appropriate chain of command in seeking to resolve conflicts. This should allow any employee to discuss any problem or area of concern immediately.

In addition, the administrative staff of L.I.F.E. Inc. shall remain available to all employees. If you have a problem that managers or area directors are unable to resolve, or if you wish to raise an issue directly with administration, you may do so. The agency has a Human Resources Department which would most often be the appropriate outlet for matters of this nature.

## General Harassment Policy

L.I.F.E. Inc. recruits, hires and promotes qualified employees without regard to race, creed, color, age, sex, handicap, religion, or national origin. It is our intention to maintain this standard and will promote equal employment opportunity in all aspects of our operation.

## Policy

L.I.F.E. Inc. strictly prohibits and will not tolerate any forms of harassment in the workplace. The company firmly believes that every employee is entitled to a work environment free from harassment or offensive conduct regardless of its form or manner. The company recognizes that harassment in the workplace seriously and negatively impacts employee morale, trust, communication, team work and productivity and creates legal liabilities for the company and its supervisors.

This policy applies to all employees. It includes the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) definition of unlawful sexual harassment which is listed below and is a portion of this agency's statement to educate all of its employees on the issue of sexual harassment.

## Procedure

### 1. Definition of Sexual Harassment

- I. *Sexual Harassment is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and is unlawful. As defined by the EEOC, sexual harassment consist of sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:*
  - a. *Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment*
  - b. *Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions*
  - c. *Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment*
- II. *Specific behaviors and particular patterns of behavior that the company shall consider sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:*
  - a. *Attempted or actual sexual assault*
  - b. *Undesired, un-accidental touching of any kind or manner*
  - c. *Propositions or any sexual advance that is unwelcome*
  - d. *Sexually oriented comments about an employee's body*
  - e. *Sexual innuendo, derogatory remarks, obscenities or offensive gestures*
  - f. *Improper questioning of an employee's personal or private life*
  - g. *Jokes of a lewd, offensive or sexual nature*
  - h. *Spoken or written abuse related to an employee's sex*
  - i. *Visual leering or ogling*
  - j. *Gender-related names, titles, or references*
  - k. *Showing or displaying pictures, drawings or objects of a sexual or offensive nature*
- III. *Sexual harassment is not confined solely to supervisory or management level employees' behavior toward their employees. Sexual harassment can also be committed by coworkers, customers, and vendors.*
- IV. *Impact vs. Intent - Sexual harassment may encompass a wide variety of actions on the part of the harasser, and reactions by the individual being harassed. Even though harassers may believe the intent behind their conduct is perfectly innocent, it is the impact that such unwelcome conduct has on the recipient that determines whether sexual harassment has occurred*
- V. *All employees are strictly forbidden to engage in any form of sexual harassment as defined in this policy. All employees are expected to understand the company's policy on sexual harassment and to avoid any act or conduct which could be viewed as sexual harassment by another individual or co-worker.*

### 2. Manager and Supervisor Responsibilities

- I. *All managers and supervisors are expected to assure a work environment free of sexual harassment. They will be*



## Procedure

*responsible for the application and communication of this policy within their program or work area, including the initiation and support of programs and practices designed to develop understanding, acceptance, commitment, and compliance within the framework of this policy.*

- II. *Managers and supervisors should encourage employees to report any violations of this policy. They will be responsible for making sure the Human Resources Department is aware of any inappropriate behavior in the workplace.*
- III. *Managers and supervisors must cooperate fully with any ongoing investigation regarding a sexual harassment incident.*
- IV. *Managers and supervisors must understand that because of their position, any behavior towards employees at off-site events may subject them to additional sexual harassment claims and personal liability.*

### 3. Dating Policy

- I. *Because consensual relationships between supervisors and their employees have the potential to create hostile working environments for both parties, the company strongly discourages managers and supervisors from dating (subordinate) employees. Such relationships tend to create favoritism (real or imagined), resentment, and moral problems.*
- II. *The company reserves the right to take affirmative steps toward minimizing potential problems created in these instances.*
  - a. *For example, transfer or resignation options may be offered to either or both of the individuals involved.*

### 4. Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Sexual Harassment

- I. *Employees are expected to report incidents of sexual harassment verbally or in writing as soon as possible after its occurrence.*
- II. *Employees who believe they have been sexually harassed, regardless of whether the offensive act was committed by a supervisor, coworker, vendor, visitor, or customer, should promptly notify their supervisor or the Human Resources Department. If the employee's supervisor is involved in the incident, the employee should report the incident to the Human Resources Department or administrator at the office.*
- III. *Every claim of sexual harassment will be considered valid and treated seriously, no matter how frivolous it may appear. All complaints of sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual conduct will be promptly and thoroughly investigated by the Human Resources Department or another administrative designee.*
- IV. *There shall be no retaliation for filing or pursuing a sexual harassment claim. To the extent possible, all complaints and related information will remain confidential except as to those individuals who need the information to investigate, educate, or take action in response to the complaint.*
- V. *Employees who believe they have been unjustly charged with sexual harassment can defend themselves verbally or in writing at any stage of the investigation.*
- VI. *At the conclusion of sexual harassment investigation the complainant and the alleged harasser shall be informed of the determination of the investigation.*

### 5. Penalties for Violation of Sexual Harassment Policy

- I. *If a sexual harassment investigation leads to the determination that the allegations are true, the necessary corrective discipline up to and including discharge, will be taken by the company.*
- II. *To ensure the consistency of application of this policy, the Human Resource Department should be consulted before any disciplinary actions are taken or any other remedies initiated.*

### 6. Educating Employees Regarding Sexual Harassment

- I. *The company makes education about sexual harassment a regular part of new employee orientations and supervisory/management development programs.*

**If an employee feels that they are being harassed; they should immediately notify their area director. If that is not possible, they can call the Human Resources Department at 401-254-2910. The following state agencies are also available to provide information and guidance: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at 401-222-3994 and the State of Rhode Island Human Rights Committee at 401-222-3645.**

## Workplace Violence Policy

The costs of workplace violence can be great, both in human and financial terms. Therefore, the agency has adopted this policy regarding workplace violence.

Acts or threats of physical violence by or directed at our employees, including intimation, harassment and/or coercion, that involve or affect agency services or that occur on agency property or in the conduct of agency business off agency property, will not be tolerated. This prohibition against threats and acts of violence applies to all persons involved in agency operations, including but not limited to L.I.F.E. Inc. personnel, contract workers, temporary employees and anyone else on or off agency property conducting business with the agency. Violations of this policy, by any individual, may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action as appropriate.

This policy is intended to bring the agency into compliance with existing legal provisions requiring employers to provide as safe a workplace as possible; it is not intended to create any obligation beyond those required by existing law.

## Workplace Violence Procedure

Workplace violence is any intentional conduct that is sufficiently severe, offensive or intimidating to cause an individual to reasonably fear for his or her personal safety or the safety of his or her family, friends and/or property such that employment conditions are altered or a hostile, abusive or intimidating work environment is created for one or more employees. Workplace violence may involve any threats or acts of violence occurring on agency premises, regardless of the relationship between the agency and the parties involved in the incident. It also includes threats or acts of violence that affect the business interests of the agency or that may lead to an incident of violence on agency premises. Threats or acts of violence occurring off agency premises that involve employees, agents or individuals acting as a representative of the agency, whether as victims of or active participants in the conduct, may also constitute workplace violence.

*Specific examples of conduct that may constitute threats or acts of violence under this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:*

- *Threats or acts of physical or aggressive contact directed toward another individual*
- *Threats or acts of physical harm directed toward an individual or his/her family, friends, associates or property*
- *The intentional destruction or threat of destruction of agency property or another employee's property*
- *Harassing or threatening phone calls*
- *Surveillance*
- *Stalking*
- *Veiled threats of physical harm or similar intimidation*
- *Any conduct resulting in the conviction under any criminal code provision relating to violence or threats of violence that adversely affects the agency's legitimate business interests*

Workplace violence does not refer to occasional comments of a socially acceptable nature. These comments may include references to legitimate sporting activities, popular entertainment or current events. Rather, it refers to behavior that is personally offensive, threatening or intimidating.

## Workplace Violence Procedure Enforcement

Any person who engages in a threat or violent action on agency property may be removed from the premises as quickly as safely allowed and may be required, at the agency's discretion, to remain off agency premises pending the outcome of an investigation of the incident.

When threats are made or acts of violence are committed by an employee, a judgment will be made by the agency as to what actions are appropriate with respect to that employee, including potential disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

## Workplace Violence Procedure Enforcement

L.I.F.E. Inc. will make the sole determination of whether, and to what extent, threats or acts of violence will be acted upon by the agency. In making this determination, the agency may undertake a case-by-case analysis in order to ascertain whether there is a reasonable basis to believe that workplace violence has occurred. No provision of this policy alters the at-will nature of employment.



L.I.F.E. Inc. is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer and recruits, hires and promotes qualified employees without regard to race, creed, color, age, sex, handicap, religion, or national origin. Basic qualifications for most direct service positions include having a good driving record, an ability to comprehend and carry out various treatment programs, and the ability to properly record results of program efforts, service delivery, and the like.

We run ads periodically to maintain an active file of applicants. Once an applicant indicates their availability, shift preference, etc., the application is processed by the Human Resources Department. Processed applications are provided to the managers of programs with current openings. The manager will review the applications for potential matches relative to open positions, applicant availability, shift preference, and desire for full or part-time. The manager, and participants when appropriate, will call applicants who appear suited for the position available, to schedule a follow-up interview.

Upon successful processing of application and related interviewing procedures, applicant will participate in State-mandated credentialing training. Offers of employment contingent upon acquiring necessary credentials may occur where match has been made between applicant and available position.

*Offers of employment would also be contingent upon:*

- *A good driving record and valid driver's license (as applicable)*
- *Agency's consideration to potentially accommodate a person's inability to complete any essential job functions*
- *Acceptable criminal background check (including no convictions for sexual assault, child abuse, or felony assault)*

*In determining whether a BCI report will or will not exclude employment, additional factors considered in determining suitability for a position may include, but not be limited to the following:*

- *Relevance to the position sought*
- *The nature of the work to be performed*
- *Time since any conviction*
- *Age of the candidate at the time of the offense*
- *Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense*
- *The number of offenses*
- *Whether the applicant has pending charges*
- *Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof*
- *Any other relevant information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the hiring authority*

Copies of the BCI and instructions on how to challenge the accuracy of a request will be provided upon request. In the event of positive findings on a BCI, after applying the above noted criteria, Human Resources or administrators shall make and document the hiring decision. Following an offer of employment, the agency will inquire as to whether an accommodation may be requested to perform the essential job functions of position offered. At that point, consideration will be provided as to whether the request can be reasonably accommodated. If, after contemplating the above matter, the agency determines it is unable to provide an accommodation; the applicant will be notified in a timely fashion.

The agency's own orientations and training process will commence once an applicant has been properly credentialed and has accepted a contingent offer of employment.

Additional training and assistance will be provided and during the introductory evaluation phase, ongoing review will be conducted by the manager to determine the applicant's status relative to the offer of employment. In some situations, employment may be discontinued during the course of the introductory evaluation phase. If employed beyond the introductory phase, employment-at-will provisions will continue to apply.



Policy

Upon hire and acceptance of a contingent offer of employment, the orientation and training of new employees occurs. This will include learning about L.I.F.E. Inc.'s mission, vision, philosophy, and the new hire's role in supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. It will also include a listing of training required to receive. The agency offers a comprehensive in-service training program, designed to instruct staff in all areas of importance relative to participants supportive service needs. It is our desire and hope in doing so, to not only improve competencies and skills, but equally important, to improve the overall quality of care provided to our participants.

## Policy

It is the policy of L.I.F.E. Inc. for staff at all programs to meet on a regular basis with management staff to jointly problem solve and discuss matters of importance in providing support to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Staff meetings are the best opportunity for team conversations and sharing of thoughts and ideas relating to issues of common concern. The agency highly values the input of all staff and believes strongly in a 'participatory' style of management. Every effort will be made by management personnel to arrange scheduling of meetings at a time convenient to the greatest number of staff possible.

Attendance at staff meetings is considered a job requirement. Compensation is provided for attendance. In rare circumstances, staff may discuss with the manager the inability to attend a scheduled meeting. If appropriate documentation is submitted, consideration of an excused absence will be provided. Excused absences will only be available for major medical emergencies (i.e.: use of emergency room/hospitalization) jury duty, school or second job, scheduling conflicts. Employees who have prearranged vacation use of ETO time will also be excused. Unexcused absences for meetings will be handled through normal agency disciplinary action procedures applied relative to all job requirements.

Any in-service training provided at staff meetings must be made up. Staff can make these arrangements through their manager to accomplish this requirement.

## Policy

The following additional information is provided in regard to this organization's policies and procedures relative to attendance at mandatory in-service programs.

*On its part, the agency expects to adhere to these commitments:*

- *In order to assist applicants in becoming qualified to become paid employees of the agency, state-mandated credentialing will be provided to those who have applied for employment*
- *Once you are considered an employee, your attendance and participation at in-service training programs and staff meetings will be paid time (under most circumstances)*
- *We will acknowledge and respond to your comments and concerns regarding how information is provided and presented, in an effort to constantly upgrade and improve methods of doing so*
- *In addition to providing mandatory and necessary material, we will attempt to offer training experiences (either directly or indirectly) within areas and subjects of greatest importance to you*
- *In scheduling in-service programs, every effort will be made to provide you with substantial advance notice, normally a minimum of two (2) weeks*
- *Attempts will be made in scheduling in-services to accommodate as many staff as possible, in light of differing work shifts and the like*

*On the employee's part, the agency expects adherence to these guidelines:*

- *Every effort is made to attend the actual in-service for their program, since this is the most effective method whereby information can be supplied*
- *Regarding mandatory in-services and staff meetings, those staff unable to attend scheduled programs will be asked to provide documentation, indicating the reason to their manager*
  - » *When material or other options are available, staff will be required to make-up the in-service*
  - » *Arrangements must be made through your manager to do so*
  - » *Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken for unexcused absences or failure to comply with makeup provisions*
- *It is the expectation of the Agency that all in-service participants arrive on time and conduct themselves attentively and professionally*
- *L.I.F.E. Inc.'s also utilizes an online learning management platform for some trainings*
  - » *Employees access the platform through the employee website ([www.lifeinc.org/employee](http://www.lifeinc.org/employee)) where they certify their level of understanding for each topic before receiving credit each year*

CPR certification is required and the agency provides assistance by offering CPR instruction weekly at the Main Office. If an employee allows their CPR certification to expire, placement on Special Probationary status with a limited time frame for re-certification will follow. This status may include being suspended without pay until the certification is achieved.

It is important that an up-to-date personnel file be kept for every employee.

*Staff is required to notify their manager of any change in the following:*

- *Home address*
- *Telephone number*
- *Marital status*
- *Number of dependents*
- *Emergency contact*
- *Involvement in criminal procedures involving the employee*
- *Status of license or insurance coverage*
- *Ability to perform job functions*

This information, along with other pertinent data such as employee evaluations, should be submitted by the manager to the Human Resources Department. Current employees may review the personnel file that pertains to them at reasonable times by arranging such with the Human Resources administrator. Each personnel file is considered private and confidential. At all times, they remain the property of the agency.

**Part I: Salaried / Exempt Employees**

*Refers to those employees who are compensated at a weekly pay rate that is established and not directly related to hours worked. Salaried employees are considered exempt from the overtime provisions of the Federal Labor Standards Act, and by definition are considered full time employees.*

**Part II: Hourly / Non-Exempt Employees**

*Refers to those employees who are compensated at established rates that are directly related to actual hours worked. Hourly employees are covered under minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employees within this category who have been designated as "on call" should track and submit time worked while on call and submit with payroll.*

**Subsection A: Full-Time Hourly Employees**

*Regular full-time hourly employees are those who are scheduled to work a minimum of thirty five (35) hours per week on an ongoing basis and maintain continuous regular employment status. Regular full-time employees are eligible for all benefits offered by the agency for their classification including Earned Time Off (ETO), Extended Medical Leave (EML), medical coverage, dental coverage, premium holiday rates, and severe weather rates.*

**Subsection B: Part-Time Hourly Employees**

*Part-time employees are those regularly scheduled to work thirty-four (34) hours or less per week. Part-time employees are eligible to accrue Earned Time Off (ETO). In addition, although not required by law due to the nature of our business, LIFE chooses to provide a premium rate of compensation to employees on certain designated holidays and declared severe weather or natural disaster situations.*

**Part III: Evaluation / Training / Substitute Employees****Subsection A: Evaluation / Training Phase Employees**

*Refers to those individuals whose continued employment is contingent upon the successful completion of certain agency requirements and/or the attainment of orientation training and acceptable driving record and criminal background check.*

**Subsection B: Substitute / Fill-In Employees (Including Training Positions)**

*Employees who do not work regularly scheduled hours, but are available to replace regular employees shall be eligible for holiday pay and any applicable statutory benefits. Substitute employees who do not work for the agency during a ninety (90) day time frame will be subject to certain re-orientation/retraining criteria prior to working again.*

**Part IV: Consultants**

*Refers to individuals who are engaged to fill positions on a fee basis, are not considered employees and therefore, are not entitled to fringe or statutory benefits.*

**Within the above noted categories, there exists various employee classifications, (i.e., direct service, office, management). As a result and to varying degrees, certain aspects of these personnel policies may be applied differently to employee classifications. This agency reserves the right to determine when and how these differing applications may apply.**

## Policy

It is the policy of L.I.F.E. Inc. that no person, other than volunteers, will perform services that would otherwise require paid staff, without the benefit of reasonable compensation.

## Procedure

The following is a schedule that identifies L.I.F.E. Inc.'s procedures relative to providing compensation to hourly employees for work performed. Although this schedule describes our current procedures in this regard, it is to be understood that due to the fact that this organization is a private, not-for-profit entity and reliant upon state and federal funding, the schedule is subject to change at any time without notice.

Entry Level: Identifies the base rate of pay at which the person was hired.

Two, Five, Ten, Fifteen & Twenty Year Longevity Increases: Identifies increases to base pay which occur at specified intervals resulting from continued employment with L.I.F.E., Inc for those hourly employees hired prior to January 1, 2008 who selected to remain in the step increase program and hourly employees hired after that date. These increases are contingent upon adequate funding from governmental sources to allow them to occur.

Pay Adjustments: Identifies periodic adjustments to pay that occur at the discretion of L.I.F.E., Inc. and are made available on the basis of merit. Adjustments are issued in lump sums and ultimately, for those eligible, having the impact of increasing a person's pay for the covered time frame. These increases are contingent upon adequate funding from government sources to allow them to occur.

General/Cost of Living Increases: Identifies those increases which may occur periodically, adding to an employee's base pay.

## Other Payroll Terms

Overtime: Additional amounts paid to staff for working beyond forty (40) hours within a week.  
(See Section 22)

Holiday Premium: Additional amounts paid to staff working on certain specific agency identified holidays.  
(See Section 15)

Severe Weather & Natural Disasters: Additional amounts paid to staff for working during a declared situation.  
(See Section 22a)

Policy

All newly hired persons will be provided specific training orientation and additional support from their direct supervisor and other agency personnel during the Initial Evaluation Period. The primary intent of this arrangement is to identify and address any problems a new employee may have in understanding or performing their responsibilities. In any new ventures, especially those as challenging and diverse as working in this field, it may not be possible for everyone to successfully perform the work. Therefore, regular and ongoing evaluation will occur throughout an individual's employment with special attention to this process during the first year of employment. Supervisors will provide verbal performance evaluation feed back to the new employee during that first year of employment. Employees will be expected to cooperate and participate in the process of obtaining all necessary trainings in order to attain and maintain the skills necessary to perform their job responsibilities.



L.I.F.E. Inc. and its administrative staff believe that all employees have a right and should come to expect ongoing feedback relative to their job performance regarding both positive performance and areas which may require improvement. Therefore, all regular full-time and part-time direct support professionals will be regularly evaluated by the manager of the program in which they are employed, with input from program participant where applicable.

Generally, written evaluations will be conducted at least annually. However, in certain instances, employees may receive evaluation reports more often than annually, (i.e., as a result of the specific need for job performance improvement) resulting in the need to participate in a plan designed to improve performance. The ongoing evaluation process will be utilized as a basis for determination if the staff person will receive discretionary merit increases. Following a review by an administrator, any scheduled increase may be withheld in part or full, either until such time that the problems leading to such a determination have been corrected or, as appropriate, for a longer period of time. The procedure to be utilized by management staff to inform employees of the need for improved work performance and to offer further assistance in making such improvement is referred to as "Employee Improvement Sessions."

In certain circumstances, such as when annual training or certifications have not been completed in a timely fashion, employees may be re-classified into the evaluation or training status. In this circumstance, this status will be applied for a thirty (30) day time frame. Should necessary criteria that led to this action not be achieved, employment may be terminated.

L.I.F.E. Inc. seeks to develop and reward certain talents displayed and utilized by employees. In an effort to recognize such effort, it will be our intention to promote existing personnel to positions of improved salary and increased responsibility whenever warranted and possible.

*Any employee interested in promotion to a leadership position, will need to complete the following steps:*

- *Staff are encouraged to discuss with their supervisor, desires to be considered for advancement*
  - » *This will allow for a discussion at any time, of the particular staff person's strengths and needs, but is encouraged to be reviewed at the time of employee evaluation*
  - » *The agency will reserve the right to determine the appropriateness of an employee's qualifications*
  - » *The possibility of promotion should not be construed as a standing commitment to maintain employment of any employee, in light of the at-will relationship already established*
- *Write a letter of intent describing why they are interested and qualified for promotion*
  - » *Submit letter to the area director or manager*
- *The manager and area director will discuss promotion request and provide feedback to employee requesting consideration*

Direct support professionals who have been with the agency for at least fifteen (15) years will be eligible to be promoted to non-weekend status. The intent of this policy is that whenever possible the regular schedule for these employees might no longer include weekend (Saturday and Sunday) hours.

Upon hire, an employee will need to stay in the position offered by the agency for a minimum of three (3) months, prior to considering an alternative position.

*In these cases, the employee would have the following options:*

- *Apply for another position within the agency that they could move into after the three (3) month wait period*
- *They can forfeit their current position and request continued employment as an active relief staff*

*If a staff, who has been with the agency for more than three (3) months, cannot work certain shifts or even their entire position, these options are available:*

- *The area director has the authority to review and consider approving any position changes or adjustments to staff schedules*
  - » *Employees can apply for an adjustment to be made to their current schedule, but an adjustment would only be made if it does not compromise the supports of the program*
- *They can apply to their manager for a transfer to another program or position*
  - » *All requests for transfer must be reviewed and approved by the area director and administrator of Human Resources*
- *They can forfeit their current position and request continued employment as an active relief staff*

## Policy

Notices of resignation by employees can be provided either verbally or in written form, directly to one's manager or the Human Resources administrator. Any remaining accrued and unused ETO will be paid out with the person's final paycheck, so long as employment with L.I.F.E. Inc. has occurred for at least one year.

Due to the fact that all employees of this organization are considered employees at will, there is no requirement for advance notice of resignation by the employee.

## Policy

A re-hire is defined as a person who was previously employed with L.I.F.E. Inc. and who is looking for current employment.

*In the event that a former direct support professional is re-hired within five (5) years, the following considerations will apply:*

- *Will be paid at an hourly base rate that is equal to the highest base rate previously achieved with the agency or the current agency entry rate, whichever is higher*
- *Given credit for previous completed years of service related to ETO and EML eligibility and accrual*
  - » *A re-hired former employee will have to wait three (3) months to begin utilizing ETO and EML and will accrue ETO at same rate as any other employee with equivalent years of service*
    - *Any previously accrued ETO or EML, having been cleared from record upon previous departure, is no longer available*
  - » *Medical and dental insurance eligibility will occur on the first of the month following sixty (60) days of re-employment with the agency*
  - » *The one (1) year criteria exception for potential ETO cash out is waived*

## Policy

Rules of conduct for employees are established to protect the best interest of the agency, staff, and participants. It is impractical, and not our intent, to spell out everything expected of you by L.I.F.E. Inc and your coworkers in terms of honesty, courtesy, and good conduct. Lists of rules cannot possibly cover all situations that may arise. Common sense is probably the best guide available. However, some actions of particular note cannot be tolerated and certain areas are described in general terms. These actions may lead to correction procedures, up to and including immediate discharge. In deciding whether to, and what form action might take, the agency reserves the right to take into account such factors as severity of infraction, length of service, and overall record of job performance.

## General Rules

1. *Prohibition of possession or use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or other intoxicants while on the agency's premises or during working hours*
  - a. *Suspicion of use may result in a request for a urine sample that could subsequently be tested by an appropriate laboratory*
2. *Prohibition of destruction, damage, misuse, or theft of agency or associated property, or property of fellow employees or participants*
  - a. *Removal of any property must be previously authorized*
  - b. *This includes utilizing agency provided vehicles for personal business*
3. *Prohibition of altering or falsifying records, including time reports*
4. *Prohibition of deliberate interference with the work of agency employees*
5. *Prohibition of fighting, threatening, or provoking a fight on agency premises or while otherwise working*
6. *Prohibition of immoral or indecent conduct*
7. *Prohibition of insubordination or failure to carry out any reasonable instruction issued by a supervisor*
8. *Prohibition of unauthorized possession of firearms or explosive materials or carrying concealed weapons at any time on agency premises or while otherwise working*
9. *Failure to heed accepted standards of work performance including the use of unauthorized or prohibited behavioral procedures*
10. *Prohibition of physical, mental, sexual, or any other form of abuse of a participant*
11. *Prohibition of negligently or intentionally endangering the welfare of a participant or fellow employee of the agency*
12. *All employees of L.I.F.E. Inc. must consider the welfare of our participants as the primary concern in the discharge of their responsibilities*
13. *Direct Support Professionals (DSP) are prohibited from bringing their pets to work without manager's approval*
14. *At no time may any support staff leave certain supported individuals unattended in a vehicle without visual monitoring being possible, unless approved by a supervisor.*
15. *DSP are prohibited from taking residents to their own home for visits unless they have prior approval from their manager or area director.*
16. *Acceptable use of computer equipment and other technology*
  - a. *This includes the prohibition of plugging personal computers or participant's computers into network ports and the use of participant's computers by staff*

As previously stated, this is an example list of rules only, not intended to be complete and all inclusive. L.I.F.E. Inc. recognizes that appropriate conduct is important and it is hoped that all employees recognize the need for proper conduct.

## Policy

L.I.F.E. Inc's management philosophy includes the concept of providing employees with support and assistance to improve upon work related skills. As a result, management discussions with employees in this regard are referred to as Employee Improvement Sessions. The following outline is intended to provide a general overview of this organization's employee improvement action procedures. Although it shall remain our overall intent to implement these and other policies in a consistent and fair manner, employees should recognize that each situation will be evaluated individually with regard given to variable factors such as severity of matter at hand, length of service and previous record of service in determining whether and in what form action might be taken. Employees are encouraged to seek immediate resolution to any misunderstanding which may occur (most immediate supervisor - first contact), utilizing the standard chain of command protocol, whenever possible. Certain issues that come to a supervisor's attention may be handled via conversation between supervisor and employee. Hopefully, this will provide the opportunity for correction of such matters, without the use of more formalized improvement action procedures.

Violations of policies and procedures or any other conduct on the part of an employee which is deemed to be an infraction of acceptable work habits or not in the best interest of individuals supported will be subject to improvement action. Conduct requiring supervisory correction which does not require more immediate and stringent improvement action, will be recorded as a First Written Reminder. As implied, the staff person should be apprised of the need to avoid similar future conduct.

Violations of policies and procedures or any other conduct on the part of an employee which is deemed to be an infraction of acceptable work habits or not in the best interest of individuals supported, which follows previous similar conduct, would mandate at least the imposition of a Second Written Reminder, should a more stringent improvement action not be required. The staff person should be apprised in writing of the need to avoid similar future conduct. Documentation of the Second Written Reminder should be entered into the person's personnel file.

Violations of policies and procedures or any other conduct on the part of an employee which is deemed to be an infraction of acceptable work habit or not in the best interest of clients served, which follows previous similar conduct for which said employee has received a Second Written Reminder, would mandate at least the imposition of the employee's placement on Notice should a more stringent improvement action not be required. The staff person should be apprised in writing of the need to avoid similar future conduct. Documentation of Notice action should be entered into the person's personnel file.

Violations of policies and procedures or any other conduct on the part of an employee which is deemed a very serious infraction of acceptable work habits or seriously jeopardizes the health or safety of a individual supported, or which follows any previous conduct for which said employee has been placed on Notice, would mandate an administrative review and determination of future employment status. In such case, employee may be placed on unpaid suspension and should such a review dictate, a discharge action would occur.

As previously noted, in deciding whether and what form improvement action shall take, this organization and its agents shall retain the right throughout implementation of the above noted and any other procedures, to take into account certain variable factors. In so doing, although our intent shall remain that of applied fairness, it may result in somewhat different action being taken for similar offenses. Whenever warranted or requested, employees shall be offered assistance by supervisory staff in further understanding the reason why action was taken. If possible, this assistance shall include support to correct any problem which may have led to an employee infraction. Once corrected, the action taken will mature over time, generally within a year.

From time to time, L.I.F.E. Inc. may find it necessary to conduct an investigation. If it does, each employee is expected as a condition of employment to cooperate in any such investigation. Failure to cooperate in such an

## Policy

investigation subjects an employee to action up to and including discharge, as required by state law.

Investigations will be conducted as quickly as possible. Every consideration will be provided to allow employees to continue working during investigations, so long as there is no perceived risk to health and safety of participants or staff and teamwork is not seriously compromised. In the event that administrative leave is deemed necessary, such leave will be unpaid.

## Medication Error Procedure

Specific procedures have been developed pertaining to the administration of medications to supported individuals by staff. Following the reporting of medication errors to manager or on-call personnel, staff must complete a medication error reporting form.

*The following procedures for re-training will then occur for medication errors occurring within any twelve (12) month period:*

- *First Error: Employee will review twenty-nine step medication administration checklist with manager*
- *Second Error: Employee will review twenty-nine step medication administration checklist with manager*
- *Third Error: Employee will review twenty-nine step medication administration checklist with manager and sit with manager to pass medications*
- *Fourth Error: Nurse will in-service the employee again*
- *Fifth Error: Employee must enroll in next medical in-service class*
- *Sixth Error: Employee will be evaluated for disciplinary action up to and including termination*



## Policy

Poor attendance and lateness play an important part in overall job performance. Excessive lateness and unexcused absences are serious violations of agency policy.

In the event that, for whatever reason, next shift replacement staff are delayed in arriving, on duty staff may be required to remain at work. As much advance notice must be given as possible in order to arrange for a replacement. When advance notice is not possible, then the employee or a representative must provide notice as soon as possible thereafter. For the benefit of fellow staff and the participants we support, it is always appreciated when employees calling out without advance notice assist in the process of finding a replacement. This should be done in consultation with manager or on-call staff.

Whenever available and applicable, paid time (ETO/EML/Bereavement) benefits shall be taken to help employees avoid taking unpaid time off. Direct support professionals taking time off and having no compensable benefit time available are at risk for being out on an unexcused absence. In these circumstances, employees can seek to avoid employee improvement action by arranging an approved shift-switch or otherwise finding an approved replacement for themselves. In situations where extended absence is likely, agency should be made aware of employee's status on a regular basis. Employees must call and speak with their supervisor when calling out of a shift within twenty-four (24) hours of the start of that shift or if leaving before the end of the current shift. Beyond that time frame, requests to be out must be managed through the MITC Workforce Management System. Employees taking time off who have no compensable time (ETO) available, can access, if applicable, time that is covered by various federal and state leave programs.

It is the policy of L.I.F.E. Inc. to provide at least three (3) hours of paid work to any employee who is scheduled or requested by a supervisor to report to work and does so. Periodically however, if less than three (3) hours of work is available (i.e. staff meetings of shorter duration) employee will be provided the option to leave voluntarily. If employee desires to stay for at least three (3) hours work will be provided.

## Procedure

*In order to provide assurance for continued shift to shift coverage (in 24 hour support situations), the following procedures are to be followed:*

- *In the event (whether notified in advance or not) that any or all next shift replacement staff do not arrive, on duty staff may be required to remain at work*
  - » *Such determination will be made in consultation with manager, assistant manager, area director, or an administrator*
- *In situations where appropriate consultation is not possible, but staff are on duty with others, staff are expected to make a team decision regarding who will remain on duty to maintain appropriate staffing patterns*
- *In no event when 24 hour/7 day a week support is provided, should the participants be left understaffed without consultation with the manager, assistant manager, area director, or an administrator*
- *Under no circumstances shall any 24 hour/7 day a week program be left non-staffed*
  - » *This situation could lead to serious criminal charges being filed against those who allowed this situation to occur*
- *In the event that scheduled employees are not needed in any program, including participants living with family or in apartments, staff should report to their manager*
  - » *Manager will assist in the possible reassignment to another program within the same cluster where additional support is needed*
  - » *When open shifts are available or training time can be arranged within a cluster program, reassignment can occur*
  - » *Should the staff prefer, in circumstances where no open shifts are available, ETO time can be used so no pay is lost or staff may agree to take time off as approved unpaid time*



## Procedure

- The agency utilizes the MITC Workforce Management System to track employee work hours
  - » Employees must utilize required equipment to scan in and out of work
  - » Employees are allowed to scan in up to ten (10) minutes prior to their scheduled shift
  - » All requests for time off, time corrections, or schedule changes must be made through MITC.
  - » Employees must regularly review and confirm their schedule on the MITC system

L.I.F.E. Inc., in cooperation with its valued employees, is constantly aspiring to provide the highest quality of supports possible to persons with developmental disabilities and their families. We have established for all programs staffing patterns that we believe allow us to provide those supports. In order to maintain our high standards we attempt to maintain those staffing patterns while also balancing our desire to allow employees to utilize ETO with the greatest degree of flexibility possible. Therefore, employees using ETO, especially with very short notice are requested, to participate whenever possible in attempting to arrange a replacement for themselves through shift switch arrangement. By encouraging staff to flexibly replace themselves by switching a shift with a coworker, employees are able to retain ETO for more extended periods of time off.

To assist staff in this process, we will provide a current list of fellow staff with phone numbers. Staff that are unable to assist in the process of arranging for a replacement is requested to contact their manager or the person on-call as far in advance as possible so that a replacement can be sought by management staff.

## Policy

Paid leave, in the form of ETO, is granted to eligible employees in recognition of the need to have periodic respite from continuous service. While every effort will be made to grant extended (more than three (3) days) planned leave days of an employee's choice, the first priority in doing so will remain the effective operation of the program. Whenever possible, requests for taking planned extended ETO leave should be made in advance and made known to an employee's supervisor. If an employee has arranged a replacement or arranged an approved shift switch, they can avoid utilizing ETO time if desired. ETO can be utilized to provide compensation for the first three (3) days out upon the filing of a Worker's Compensation claim.

ETO leave benefits begins to accrue immediately, but is only available for use after three months of employment. Up to two-hundred (200) hours for hourly or thirty (30) days for salaried employees may be accrued at the end of each calendar year (limit may be temporarily exceeded during the year). No more than two (2) weeks (ten (10) days for salaried) may be continuously taken, without the approval of the administrator of Human Resources. ETO time accrued by an employee is payable upon departure from employment, so long as the person has been employed for at least one year, under the same terms for other employees as outlined in Section 21.

## Procedure

ETO leave will be allocated in accordance with the following arrangements when an employee is working and on non-leave status.

*The following multipliers are applied to all hours paid (including overtime) thereby creating yearly hour numbers (or more) and for part-time employees, allows for a quicker accrual of available ETO time:*

### Accrual Schedule: Full-Time Hourly Employees

Eligibility Period	Multiplier	Yearly Subtotal Available
<i>Year One</i>	<i>.04230</i>	<i>88 hours or more</i>
<i>Year Two</i>	<i>.05100</i>	<i>106 hours or more</i>
<i>Year Three to Four</i>	<i>.06000</i>	<i>125 hours or more</i>
<i>Year Five to Nine</i>	<i>.06555</i>	<i>136 hours or more</i>
<i>Year Ten and Beyond</i>	<i>.08654</i>	<i>180 hours or more</i>

ETO is available to be used by hourly employees in four (4) hour or longer increments.

### Accrual Schedule: Part-Time Hourly Employees

Eligibility Period	Multiplier	Maximum Yearly Available
<i>2018</i>	<i>.02820</i>	<i>24 hours</i>
<i>2019</i>	<i>.01870</i>	<i>32 hours</i>
<i>2020 and Beyond</i>	<i>.02340</i>	<i>40 hours</i>

ETO is available to be used by hourly employees in four (4) hour or longer increments.

## Distribution Schedule: Salaried Employees

Eligibility Period		Yearly Subtotal Available
<i>Year One</i>		<i>8 days</i>
<i>Year Two</i>		<i>12 days</i>
<i>Year Three to Five</i>		<i>16 days</i>
<i>Year Six to Seven</i>		<i>20 days</i>
<i>Year Eight and Beyond</i>		<i>24 days</i>

Beginning January 1, 2019, ETO leave days are provided to salaried employees on the basis of 1/4 yearly amount on January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 prorated in the first year of employment on the basis of hire date. Salaried employees must take ETO in full day increments.

ETO is available to all employees and is available for use in circumstances determined by the employee. As a result, the agency utilizes ETO to comply with the Rhode Island Healthy and Safe Families and Workplace Act. Please note, in any given year, once part-time employees have accrued all ETO time available under the schedule's listed above, no additional ETO time is available once that allocation is utilized unless they become full-time scheduled staff.

L.I.F.E. Inc.'s Extended Medical Leave (EML) policy is designed to provide salary income protection for staff in the event of illness, accident or other cause requiring medical attention beyond an employee's normal scheduled work week (week one is normally intended to be covered by ETO). The agency therefore reserves the right to request medical verification of illness or injury for all uses of extended leave. Illnesses that extend beyond three (3) calendar days indicate that a period of incapacity has been established and that a serious health condition may exist. In the event that a Worker's Compensation claim is filed, the first three (3) days missed would be paid under ETO. Such situations require both medical verification and a certificate by the treating physician indicating the employee's fitness to return to work. In the event that the condition fulfills the requirements outlined under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the leave time taken will be classified as such from the onset of leave forward (see Section 17). For clarification and informational purposes, employees will be notified whenever Family Medical Leave or other leave provisions apply.

EML is available for use only for illness or non-work related injury of the employee. Female employees giving birth would be allowed to utilize up to four (4) weeks of EML, following the use of three (3) days of ETO. Extensions of that time could occur as a result of verified medical issues. EML is accrued at the rate of up to four (4) hours per month for hourly employees for those scheduled to work at least thirty-five (35) hours per week. (six (6) days annually for salaried added in two (2), three (3) day increments). Accrual commences at the beginning of the month following three (3) months of employment. Up to 360 hours (forty-five (45) days for salaried) can be accumulated in an Extended Medical Leave account. EML accrued prior to an employee dropping below thirty-five (35) scheduled hours will be retained and usable as per guidelines.

In the event that an employee is able to provide medical verification of a condition which requires hospitalization, EML may be accessed after the first three (3) days of ETO use. Subsequent hospitalization for the same verified issue would allow access to EML from the first day of re-hospitalization.

All employees who hold positions involving direct support to participants may be expected to work their normal shifts on specified holidays. This is due to the fact that the programs of L.I.F.E. Inc. operate 24 hours a day, 365 days each year, out of necessity. Employees who work on specified holidays will be granted premium pay (time and 1/2) for all hours worked that day.

*Holidays with premium pay include:*

- *New Year's Day*
- *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*
- *President's Day*
- *Memorial Day*
- *July Fourth*
- *Labor Day*
- *Columbus Day*
- *Veteran's Day*
- *Thanksgiving Day*
- *Christmas Day*

Hourly employees working overtime in a week during which a holiday occurs, will also be paid time and one-half for all hours worked that week over 40, regardless of the day when the holiday occurs. Additionally, employees who are U.S. military veterans and scheduled to work on Veteran's Day are provided the day off (up to eight (8) hours) with pay.

## Policy

Paid bereavement is provided courtesy of L.I.F.E. Inc. to all employees in the event of death of an immediate family member. Immediate family member involves parents, spouse, and parents of spouse, sibling, children or child dependents of the employee.

*Paid time is available in accordance with the following arrangements:*

- *Compensation for hours of work missed (three fifths of an employee's normal scheduled hours) upon verification that death of an immediate family member has occurred*
- *By definition, employees who are not actively working at the time (i.e., on leave already, receiving worker's compensation, etc.) will not be eligible for paid bereavement since they are not missing time from work*
  - » *Those out using ETO would be eligible to supplement with bereavement time when applicable*
- *Whenever possible, and at the agency's discretion, additional bereavement leave may be provided by allowing regular agency benefits to be applied.*

Depending upon the circumstances, employees may be eligible for obtaining a job protecting (same or equivalent) leave of absence.

*Leaves of absence may occur for a variety of reasons, including:*

- *For an employee being unable to work due to their own illness, injury, impairment, or other condition*
- *For the illness, injury, impairment, or other condition of a child in their custody*
- *For the illness, injury, impairment, or other condition of certain other family members when the employee serves as a caregiver*
- *For certain school related events*
- *For the birth or adoption of a child in their custody*

Verification of reason given for leave request may be required, along with, in certain circumstances, verification of fitness to return to work. Beyond the use of agency-provided paid benefits (ETO & EML), Temporary Caregiver Leave time paid through the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training's Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) program, or through the agency-sponsored Worker's Compensation Program, leave is unpaid. Employees on leave for their own medical reasons would utilize the equivalent of one week's worth of ETO prior to accessing EML (see Section 14). In the event that leave time taken meets the criteria for Rhode Island's Parental & Family Medical Leave Act (13 weeks every other year), the R.I. Caregiver Act (4 weeks), or the Federal Family Medical Leave Act (12 weeks), leave time may run concurrently with any & all of these leave arrangements. L.I.F.E. Inc. also offers special leave arrangements for those actively serving in the U.S. Military of up to twenty-six (26) weeks.

In most cases, an employee's individualized allowable leave time frame commences with their initial use of leave in the applicable leave programs. Whenever possible, leave requests should be made as much in advance as possible. While on leave, communication with your supervisor or with our Human Resources Department relevant to your ongoing status will assist in the process of preparing for your return to work. Generally, eligibility for previously in place medical or dental insurance coverage shall continue through leave situations, so long as the employee continues to pay their share of the monthly premium co-pay.

Due to the nature of our work and the need of certain supported individuals for constant supervision and training, previously occupied staff positions may need to be filled. In order to provide for programming needs, basic staffing patterns have been developed for each supported situation. In order to allow staff to take necessary leaves of absence in light of the above, attempts will be made to hold a position open for at least a portion of that leave, whenever possible. Due to the varied nature of each leave situation, criteria aimed at addressing this goal will be individually established. When specific positions cannot be held open, employees returning from approved leaves will be provided with an equivalent position with similar hours and if possible, within the same location previously employed..

Exceptions to the above criteria could involve, but not be limited to, situations where the employee may be subject to normal personnel occurrences (i.e., reorganization, Employee Improvement action) while on leave.



## Policy

In most cases, the agency is required by law to make certain statutory payroll deductions, such as state and federal income taxes and Social Security. Other deductions that are of a more voluntary nature may include 401K contributions, employee share for medical and dental insurance, and the like. It should be noted that L.I.F.E. Inc. established for the benefit of its employees and utilizes a Section 125 plan arrangement, which means that employee share of premiums, (health insurance, dental, disability [excluding AFLAC disability/cancer protection plan], medical & daycare expenses) are deducted from your gross earnings, before taxes are determined and assessed. This results in a higher net pay for the employee.

## Policy

It is the policy of L.I.F.E. Inc. to not become involved in any form of wage assignment or garnishment unless specifically ordered to do so by legal court order. If this does occur, the agency may be required to deduct money from an employee's pay and forward it to the creditor or other involved party.

L.I.F.E. Inc.'s pay periods will encompass fourteen (14) days and paychecks will be issued within nine (9) days of the last day for each pay period. Employees will be responsible for properly utilizing equipment provided to scan in and out of work. Failure to do so could result in a late issuance of all or part of that employee's pay for that period, or in actually reducing pay for that period. All employees are required to have their pay direct deposited into the account of their choice.

## Policy

Living In Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.), Inc. offers employees the opportunity to convert available ETO time into immediate cash. This benefit is extended to those employed with L.I.F.E. Inc. for at least one (1) year. Employees must have sufficient ETO time available for the transaction to occur.

Additionally, individuals departing the employ of the agency will receive a full payout of remaining ETO accrued balance if employed by L.I.F.E. Inc. for at least one (1) year.

## Procedure

Available ETO time can be distributed as cash when a request is made by the employee using Form B10 and submitting it to the Human Resources Department. Upon receipt of this form a check will be processed and available for pickup at the main office within three (3) days from the date the form is submitted. Employee should call ahead to confirm the availability of the check before traveling to the office.

Employees are allowed to request a payout of available ETO up to five (5) times per year. After that, the employee must wait until the following January 1 to request another payout. If an employee does not have enough ETO time available in their account to cover their request, the check will be adjusted to reflect the available amount. Employee's current ETO balance can be found on the bottom of each paycheck stub.

## Policy

L.I.F.E. Inc. recognizes that historically, a number of staff employed with us utilized second jobs due to the high cost of living. In response to this, the agency invites direct support professionals to have their “second job” with us through our Turbo Shift opportunities. We have created and allow staff to work “turbo shifts” where overtime is built into their schedule. Beyond these arrangements, approval is required by supervisors prior to working overtime. Hours worked in excess of forty (40) per week will be paid at time and one-half the employee’s regular hourly rates. This provision will be applied by the agency, even though not required by law, during weeks when overtime and a holiday occur in the same week.

According to the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act and applicable state labor laws, overtime pay must be provided to all non-exempt staff for actual hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week. The rules do allow certain flexibility in applying the law. For instance, if an employee is given time off during the same week they worked hours beyond their schedule, resulting in not working more than forty (40) hours, overtime does not result.

Temporary requests to work additional hours may occur from time to time. However, it is the policy of this agency, whenever seeking to alter an employee’s regular schedule on an ongoing basis, to provide at least one week’s notice. Refusal of additional hours could result in declining an entire regular position.

## Policy

Normally, in the event that an employee's complete scheduled shift is canceled, alternative work will be offered within the same cluster whenever possible. This arrangement will not apply during declared severe weather and natural disaster time frames.

During these situations, L.I.F.E. Inc.'s management personnel will seek to recruit Emergency Response Team (ERT) members from each program. These teams will be assembled with the established goal of remaining in place throughout the duration of the event (generally at least twenty-four (24) hours). When the call goes out from management to establish the program's ERT, all staff are invited to volunteer. Staff serving on ERT's will be paid at time and 1/2 for every hour worked during the established time frame.

Once ERT's are established at any program, all other staffing schedules are discontinued for the duration of the event. ETO would not be available since schedules have been discontinued and purchasing ETO would be available for those employed at least one (1) year.

## Policy

Eligible employees of the agency are covered by the Federal Social Security Act. This is government insurance which provides retirement income, medical survivor payments, and other benefits. The employee and agency share equally with regard to compliance with this act.



Group medical, dental, and life insurance benefits are made available for all eligible employees and their families. Employees become eligible for these benefits after three (3) months of employment and have met identified scheduled hours criteria. It is the responsibility of the employee to sign up for medical and dental insurance. Although the agency offers coverages to eligible employees, it assumes no responsibility for employees signing up. Eligibility will become effective on the first of the month immediately following this time frame. L.I.F.E. Inc and its employees are currently purchasing a high deductible form of medical insurance coverage. Under this arrangement, certain monthly premium copays apply, depending upon employee's decision relative to sharing in cost of deductible for certain situations. Other out of pocket expenses may also occur, including copays for office visits and co-insurance obligations. Details of all insurance coverage will be explained by Human Resources personnel with written materials provided for further detail. In accordance with the Affordable Care Act, employees who work at least 1,560 hours in a calendar year will be eligible for medical insurance. At the end of each year, a review is conducted to determine if employees fulfilling this criteria are covered, and if not, coverage is again offered through employee sign up.

In certain instances, insurance plan coverage can be maintained through private pay arrangement at the current agency group rate, following termination of employment with the agency. This arrangement will be allowed for up to thirty-six (36) months following termination or the occurrence of a specified qualifying event, and the former employee will be totally responsible for the entire payment each month. Employees and their families have up to sixty (60) days to decide whether to continue insurance coverage.

## Policy

L.I.F.E. Inc. extends, under a 401(k) arrangement, the opportunity to participate in pension planning to all eligible employees. The 401(k) arrangement may involve (as funding allows) a percentage matching employer contribution. Employees are eligible to participate in the 401(k) plan upon hire and by have scheduled hours.

The agency has in place automatic enrollment procedures for new hires (see Section 26). Automatic enrollment can be avoided by signing a declaration form.

Employees will be entitled to a share of funds contributed by the agency according to the following vesting schedule based on years of service. Year of service is defined as any year wherein an employee worked any hours and ended the calendar year as a regular employee.

Vesting Schedule	
Years of Service	Percent Vested
<i>Year Zero to Two</i>	<i>0%</i>
<i>Year Three and Beyond</i>	<i>100%</i>

Any voluntary contributions made by the employee are entirely owned by them immediately. Pension matching fund contributions are a function of the availability of funding supplied by government sources (see Summary Plan Description for additional details). The agency will announce at the beginning of each year, its intent to provide a possible matching contribution to employee's accounts. On an ongoing basis, employees can obtain information regarding their account balance, investment results, and the like, by accessing the information online at [www.mutualofamerica.com](http://www.mutualofamerica.com) or through use of a toll free number. Human Resources can be consulted regarding more complete details. Upon departure, employees who complete the necessary paperwork will be able to make a decision involving either rolling the funds into another pension account, collecting those funds as a payout or, in certain cases, leaving the funds in the L.I.F.E. Inc. pension account. Again, Human Resources will be available for assistance.

In order to provide assistance to employees to create and sustain a pension fund, L.I.F.E. Inc. (through Mutual of America consulting firm) has established automatic enrollment procedures. Under these procedures, unless new employees elect otherwise in writing, they shall be designated as participants in the established 401(k) with contributions to their own individual account on the following non-qualified graduated percentage basis:

Contribution Schedule	
Plan Year	Percent Invested
<i>Initial Plan Year</i>	<i>1% of pay</i>
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Plan Year Following Initial Year</i>	<i>1% of pay</i>
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Plan Year Following Initial Year</i>	<i>1% of pay</i>
<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Plan Year Following Initial Year</i>	<i>2% of pay</i>
<i>4<sup>th</sup> Plan Year Following Initial Year</i>	<i>2% of pay</i>
<i>5<sup>th</sup> Plan Year Following Initial Year and Beyond</i>	<i>3% of pay</i>

Through our participation in the 401(k) arrangement, the agency shall contribute (as funding allows) \$0.50 for every \$1.00 contributed to individual's account. (see Section 25 for full vesting schedule) At all times, any amount contributed by employees through payroll withholding shall remain entirely their own property.

## Policy

The agency provides full coverage and protection in accordance with Rhode Island Employee Compensation Act. Coverage is for certain injuries or illnesses sustained by an eligible employee either on the job or in connection with the job.

In the event that an employee sustains an illness or injury, their respective manager should be notified immediately or as soon as possible thereafter, in most cases within twenty four (24) hours. The employee will be asked to submit appropriate written reports relative to the injury or illness for a determination of coverage.

The first three (3) days of lost wages are not covered by Worker's Compensation. L.I.F.E. Inc. employees will be allowed to draw upon their ETO to be paid for these days.

The agency will work closely with injured employees to assist in the process of returning to work as soon as possible. This process will frequently involve the offering of alternative work or temporary accommodations. This arrangement will frequently allow employees who have been injured on the job to maintain their pay at the same rate.

## Policy

Most Rhode Island employees, including those with L.I.F.E. Inc. are eligible for TDI coverage as a partial wage maintenance program when injured or ill in a non-work related situation. Deductions for this coverage are mandatory by law and employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the eligibility rules for this program, which is administered by the Department of Labor and Training.

Regular employees who are called upon for jury duty shall notify their manager. The agency will provide time off as required by law. As a courtesy to those employees fulfilling this civic responsibility, we will provide a daily stipend matching that provided by the court. When serving jury duty directly conflicts with your scheduled hours, the agency will maintain your pay at its previous level by adding to these stipend amounts. This arrangement will be provided to employees for a maximum of two (2) weeks, when verification from the court indicating the number of hours spent in jury duty or amount of compensation is received from court. Submit above mentioned documentation at the end of the corresponding payroll.

## Policy

The agency will grant military leaves to employees who must serve temporary reserve duty and will conform with all applicable laws in this regard. Any employee who will be on temporary military leave should inform their supervisor well in advance.

This policy will include the offer to provide the person with the same or an equivalent position upon completion of short term (less than one (1) year) service. Those serving beyond a year will be offered priority rehire status for those former employees who left in good standing. In addition, for those serving National Guard or Reserve Duty, L.I.F.E. Inc. shall grant up to ten (10) paid leave days for reserve training during each calendar year the person is employed.



## Policy

The agency is able, in certain circumstances, to compensate employees who utilize their own automobile for transporting participants. Employees seeking reimbursement for mileage will maintain and submit an accurate record of miles traveled which should include, at least, the destination, reason for travel, occupants of vehicle, and actual miles traveled. Record should be submitted to the manager for payment at the end of each payroll. All travel beyond twenty (20) miles must have approval from the manager prior to departure.

*Please note:*

- *Use of your vehicle for agency purposes is voluntary and is not a requirement of the job*
- *Mileage reimbursement is intended to contribute towards the cost of operating, maintaining and insuring your vehicle for its use at work*
- *You must have liability insurance to use your vehicle for agency business*
- *In any accident situation, should the fault be considered yours, then your own liability insurance would become the primary coverage for any claim*
  - » *L.I.F.E. Inc carries its own liability coverage and the limits of this coverage would extend to assist in attempting to cover the difference between your coverage and the actual amount of any lawsuit*
  - » *Under no circumstances would the agency's insurance cover damage to your vehicle*

Submittal of travel reimbursement will only be reimbursed for the current or previous pay period. Mileage reimbursement should only include driving miles that occur between the beginning and end of one's shift.

# Policy

The agency does not assume any responsibility for the loss of money, property, or other personal effects, unless such loss is covered under existing insurance coverage. L.I.F.E. Inc. employees are urged to safeguard any possessions brought to work. This includes for example, but is not limited to cash, wallets and purses, books, computers, vehicles, hats, sunglasses, etc.

L.I.F.E. Inc. intends to provide the necessary structure to handle difficulties or grievances that may arise in regard to an employee's concern about the general application of agency policies, working conditions, and other issues that have been brought to management's concern but not resolved in an acceptable manner.

In order to most efficiently resolve most issues, staff is encouraged to seek resolution as early as possible. The grievance process should ideally approximate the typical chain of command outlined in our agency hierarchy beginning with the employee's most immediate supervisor.

Should grievances not be settled to mutual satisfaction of employee and individual program staff, then an administrator will seek to resolve the issue. Grievance procedures cannot be used in connection with disciplinary or termination actions.

Employees may be asked to present the grievance issue in writing and in some circumstance, the grievance might only be settled through a meeting of involved parties.

In order to address the need for providing continuous supportive care to the participants, as well as recognizing the needs of support staff during their established shift time frames, L.I.F.E. Inc. will establish the following ancillary policies, which all fall under the designation of Section 34.

## Policy

It is the policy of L.I.F.E. Inc. that staff be allowed to take periodic paid breaks from on-shift responsibilities, within certain parameters.

*The following guidelines apply:*

- *For each continuous two (2) hour period scheduled, staff will be allowed a break period of up to five (5) minutes*
- *Allowable breaks can be taken during the course of a staff person's shift, but are not to be utilized for the purpose of leaving early at the end of the shift*
- *All breaks are to be taken only with the approval of team members and at such time that doing so does not jeopardize the necessity to provide adequate care and supervision of the participants*
- *Only one person at a time is allowed to take a break*
- *Under no circumstance where a person is the only staff person on shift requiring participant supervision or the only staff person available to participants will a break be allowed*
- *Staff on breaks must remain immediately available to resume their normal duties should circumstances dictate*

In addition to the above, all employees who work at least a six (6) hour shift are to be afforded a meal period of thirty (30) minutes. Meal periods must be taken at the work site and employees will be paid for this time. In most circumstances, the meal periods will be taken at the same time that meals are taken by supported individuals.

*In order to address the need for providing continuous supportive care to the participants, as well as recognizing the needs of support staff during their established shift time frames, L.I.F.E. Inc. will establish the following ancillary policies, which all fall under the designation of Section 34.*

## Policy

Household telephones within the group homes, and other related programs, are available for the supported individual's personal use and for agency business. Therefore, it is the policy of L.I.F.E. Inc. that any necessary or emergency phone calls needing to be made by DSP staff, will be documented. Personal calls made that result in long distance charges shall be paid by the person making said calls. Incoming personal calls made to staff on shift, should likewise be only of the absolutely necessary or emergency type and limited to a few minutes in duration. Any outgoing calls made by DSP staff on shift should also be of emergency type only. Landline phone numbers at those sites should be provided for receipt of emergency calls. Staff will not be allowed to carry personal cell phones while working. Instead, they must be placed in docking stations so as not to interfere with meeting job expectations. Cell phones can be taken by staff while transporting, but are never to be used by drivers while vehicles carrying participants are moving. Any use of the phone's camera to take pictures of fellow staff or participants is strictly prohibited unless approved by management.

*In order to address the need for providing continuous supportive care to the participants, as well as recognizing the needs of support staff during their established shift time frames, L.I.F.E. Inc. will establish the following ancillary policies, which all fall under the designation of Section 34.*

## Policy

Smoking is allowed only in designated areas determined by the manager in each program. Smoking is not allowed in any agency vehicle or in any vehicle while transporting an individual supported by L.I.F.E. Inc. While attending community functions with the participants, smoking is allowed only if the area is a reasonable distance away, and at no time jeopardizes staffing and support needs.

*In order to address the need for providing continuous supportive care to the participants, as well as recognizing the needs of support staff during their established shift time frames, L.I.F.E. Inc. will establish the following ancillary policies, which all fall under the designation of Section 34.*

## Policy

It is the policy of L.I.F.E. Inc. that no support staff is to do their own personal laundry at any agency facility, program site, or supported individual's residence.



In order to address the need for providing continuous supportive care to the participants, as well as recognizing the needs of support staff during their established shift time frames, L.I.F.E. Inc. will establish the following ancillary policies, which all fall under the designation of Section 34.

## Policy

To assist in providing assurance that all persons transporting in agency provided vehicles are provided the safety protection available, it is the policy of L.I.F.E. Inc. that all persons transporting in agency provided vehicles are required to wear available seat belts, harness devices, etc., whenever the vehicle is in motion.

- *Whenever an agency provided vehicle is to be utilized, all persons are required to wear the appropriate belt, harness, etc.*
- *In the event that a non-agency provided vehicle is utilized, all passengers are required to wear available belt, harness, etc.*
- *In order for a supported individual to be transported in a non-agency provided vehicle, the vehicle must be insured, and proof of insurance must be provided to the manager*
  - » *Staff vehicles should also have current inspection stickers and be properly registered*
- *If an employee must be on the phone, eat, read, or write while transporting they should pull over to the side of the road, into a rest stop, or parking lot to do so*
- *Supported individuals should never be left unattended in a vehicle that is parked with its motor running.*
  - » *Keys should be removed if staff has to be out of vehicle for very short periods of time*
  - » *This should only be done when the vehicle and occupants can still be in close proximity and visual contact can be maintained*
  - » *When picking up other supported individuals in an already occupied vehicle and above procedures cannot be adhered to, driver should honk horn to signal arrival so other individual can be brought out to vehicle*
- *For loading and unloading protocols to be utilized for wheelchair users see Section 34f*

*The following guidelines apply for loading the van:*

- Staff will be sure that the van's emergency brake is engaged before loading or unloading passengers
- Electrically powered chairs will be turned down to lowest speed setting
  - » Staff will manually push chair onto lift or utilize control to do so or users deemed capable will be allowed to utilize controls to move onto lift
- Once a chair is positioned onto lift, chair should be placed in locked position and lift may then be raised by staff
- Safety line will be lowered (if equipped) and chair unlocked
- Non-electric and electric chairs under the control of staff will be pulled or driven by them onto van
  - » Users deemed capable of operating controls will be allowed to move onto van
- Staff will then secure chair utilizing the safety equipment installed, making sure chair is locked and shut off and all belts are secured
- Staff will replace safety line, if equipped

*The following guidelines apply for unloading the van:*

- Staff will open van doors and lower lift, being sure that it is properly aligned with van floor level
- Staff reenter van and double check that lift is in proper position for unloading
- Safety line will then be lowered (if equipped)
- Staff will remove straps and belts before unlocking chair
- Chairs will be pushed onto lift by staff
  - » Users will not be allowed to drive onto raised lift for safety reasons
- Once the chair is positioned on the lift, it will be locked and safety straps (when installed) will be utilized
- Staff will lower lift to ground.
- Chair will be driven off lift by controls or pushed by staff
  - » Users deemed capable of operating chair will be allowed to drive off lift
- Staff will raise lift once chair has completely cleared

**To ensure that proper procedures and methods are used while backing up agency vehicles. These procedures have been adopted to maintain the safety of both participants and staff as well as proper maintenance and care of agency vehicles.**

- In order to attempt avoiding having to back up vehicles (especially vans), drivers should think ahead as to parking
  - » Whenever possible, vehicle should be parked so that backing out of parking space will not be necessary
    - Example: In a parking lot, pull into second space not facing other vehicles
  - » When necessary to back up vehicle, the following procedures should be followed:
    - Prior to starting engine, driver must always circle around vehicle to become aware of potential objects that could be struck when backing up
    - Whenever more than one staff person is available (or passerby) assistance should be obtained to complete back up procedures
      - + After completing circle around observation, driver should follow directions of second person, using hand signals and verbal instruction
      - + Radio and other distractions must always be turned off when backing, and driver's window should be open
      - + Spotter should be asked to remain at rear of vehicle, on driver's side and in sight of driver in side mirror
      - + Driver must stop immediately if sight of spotter is lost

## Policy

- *In the event that an accident occurs, L.I.F.E. Inc. employees must follow procedures outlined on the Vehicle Accident Procedure Form*
  - » *Stop and make sure the participants are unharmed*
    - *If not, render necessary first aid and phone for emergency assistance*
  - » *Call the police whenever possible to report the accident*
  - » *Retrieve and fill out the agency Accident Report Form and obtain information regarding any other involved vehicles, recording description of accident, witnesses, and policeman's name and badge number*
  - » *Do not become involved in discussion with other drivers regarding potential fault*
  - » *Wait for police officer to signal that you can leave*
  - » *A copy of the police report must be obtained and provided to insurance company, if requested*
  - » *Upon returning to residential or other program site, staff should report accident to manager and provide completed Vehicle Accident Procedure Form*
  - » *Manager should then contact Area Director to assist in determining whether or not accident should be called into our insurance company*
    - *If it is decided that insurance company should be notified, manager should do so along with agency driver involved in the accident*
    - *Thereafter, the manager would become the primary contact person for the insurance company*
- *In the event staff obtain tickets for moving violations or parking while driving at work, they are responsible for all assessments and fines*
  - » *Receipt of speeding tickets should be reported to manager for possible disciplinary action*

*In order to address the need for providing continuous supportive care to the participants, as well as recognizing the needs of support staff during their established shift time frames, L.I.F.E. Inc. will establish the following ancillary policies, which all fall under the designation of Section 34.*

## Policy

**In order to ensure residents rights to privacy, dignity, and confidentiality, L.I.F.E. Inc, will strive to limit unscheduled visitors to appropriate business.**

*Therefore, the following policies will be implemented:*

- *Standard procedure for answering the door:*
  - » *DSP or participant should obtain a reason for the visit*
- *For routine business (utilities visit, public officials, police, etc.) attempt to take care of business in the entry.*
  - » *Any such visits shall be documented*
- *At all times, support staff is to ensure that participants' rights to privacy are being upheld*
- *DSP staff are not permitted to have visitors in unless they have permission from their manager in advance*
- *DSP staff who are picked up and dropped off to work must ask the driver to wait outside*
- *All visits of a resident must be documented*
  - » *Staff must bear in mind confidentiality and direct all in depth questions to the manager of the program*
- *Past employees, volunteers, or present employees (on or off duty) wishing to visit participants, must be cleared in advance with the manager to do so*
- *The manager should advise the staff at the program in advance if visitors will be coming to the house and what the nature of the visit will be*
- *If a visitor shows up at the program unannounced, staff needs to be able to recognize the guest or consult with fellow team members to determine their identity*
  - » *If the individual cannot be recognized, then the manager needs to be contacted, especially if visitor is looking to remove client for an outing*
- *If staff is ever in doubt of the identity or motives of a visitor, they should immediately contact the manager of the program and involve the support of their fellow teammates*
  - » *A client should never be released to a visitor without proper authorization from a manager and verified identification*
- *DSP staff should ensure that all visitors of a participant are welcome and invited*
  - » *All visitors must conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful manner at all times*

## Policy

In our continuing efforts to ensure the health and safety of our employees, as well as to promote a safe work environment, DSP staff will be required to wear closed toe footwear with non-slip soles such as sneakers or shoes with flat rubber soles to help prevent injuries, slipping, and falling. Additionally, when circumstances (as outlined in training procedures) warrant, employees should wear other protective equipment (i.e.; gloves, masks, gowns) as needed while working.

## Policy

Periodically, situations may arise whereby L.I.F.E. Inc. employees become unable to perform one or some of the essential functions of their current position due to a medical or physical condition. In the event that these situations are work related and covered under Workers Compensation, we will follow state statutes that are designed to support the concept of keeping the employee at work and earning their full wages through accommodation. The extent and time frames for accommodation would be determined on a case by case basis, as we work cooperatively with the employee utilizing regular reports from their treating physician as a guide. In the event that accommodation is no longer possible, then the guidelines of both Workers Compensation statutes and the FMLA would be applied.

Medical or physical conditions that are not work related would be considered for accommodation wherever possible on a case by case basis, generally for shorter time frames again utilizing information supplied by the treating physician as a guideline. In these situations, once accommodation is no longer possible, the guidelines of the FMLA would be applied and leave would be made available where applicable.

In light of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA), LIFE, Inc. will seek to make reasonable accommodation to enable an individual with a disability to participate and to enjoy benefits and privileges of employment with the agency.

In light of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, the agency will also seek to accommodate any condition related to pregnancy so that employees can continue working.

The Living In Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.), Inc. Savings Club is a voluntary benefit that allows you to deposit after-tax funds into a compounded interest account held by the agency.

*The following guidelines apply to how the Savings Club operates:*

- You may join any time during the year with submittal of form B11
- The amount you designate will be deducted from each paycheck
- No external rollover or fund deposits will be allowed to be added to the account
- The account will pay interest on amounts deposited on the average daily balance compounding bi-weekly
- Currently the interest rate for the Savings Club is 3%
- Participation is restricted to one (1) account per employee
- Deposits and interest earnings will stop at a \$10,000.00 maximum per person
- You will be repaid the full amount of any deposits made into the Savings Club
- Living In Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.), Inc. is not responsible for a form that does not arrive to the office in a timely manner for processing
- Your paycheck stub is your transaction receipt of a Savings Club Deposit
- The corresponding code on your paycheck stub is SAV
- Adjustments to the amount you designate can be changed at any time can be done by resubmitting this form
- Full or partial withdrawals from the Savings Club can be done at any time by submitting Form B12
- If you close out your Savings Club account by stopping contributions, you will need to resubmit this form to begin contributions again, if you choose
- Upon leaving employment with the agency, your Savings Club account will be closed and any funds will be paid out to you



## Policy

During the course of providing support to participants, certain events may occur which may be atypical or significant enough to require them to be recorded and documented. In most cases, such incidents have resulted in harm, could have resulted in harm, or were an event which caused concern for the participant's health, safety or welfare. Once filed, incident reports are to be determined (via administrative decision) either serious or not serious.

## Procedure

*The following guidelines apply:*

- *All staff are to report incidents which involve participants utilizing the above noted criteria*
  - » *When in doubt as to whether or not a report should be filed, staff should file*
- *Reports are to be provided in writing on forms supplied with documentation of details included*
- *Incident reports should be completed as soon as possible following the event but must be completed within twenty-four (24) hours of the event*
- *Reports are to be provided to the supervisor or other management personnel in the program where incident occurred.*
- *Staff would be expected to cooperate with helping to provide any additional details deemed necessary in any investigation surrounding an incident they may have been involved in or witnessed*
- *Incidents and any related reports will be centrally filed at the agency's main office*
  - » *Such reports will be reviewed by our safety committee and core team to ascertain and provide recommendations for incident management and quality improvement*
  - » *The focus of this process will be to assist in avoiding the re-occurrence of any such future incidents of this particular or similar nature*
- *Incidents determined to be severe or very significant are to be reported to the Rhode Island Office of Quality Assurance as a serious reportable incident*

## Computer Use

All Living in Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.) Inc. computers are provided primarily for business-related purposes. Incidental or occasional personal use of the agency's computers is permitted and that such use must not, in the agency's sole judgment, exceed a reasonable level, distract or disrupt normal work activities, have undue impact on the operation of the agency's electronic systems, or violate any other agency policies. Excessive time utilizing the internet for non-business related purposes and accessing inappropriate websites from the agency's computer system will not be permitted.

L.I.F.E. Inc. e-mail systems are provided primarily for agency and client related business and incidental and occasional personal use of e-mail is permitted. However, attaching video or text clips from internet or link sites for non-business related purposes is strictly prohibited and in no event should the e-mail system be used for such purposes as soliciting or proselytizing for commercial ventures, religious, personal or political causes, or other similar, non-job-related solicitations. Additionally, material considered fraudulent, harassing, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, offensive, disruptive, derogatory, defamatory, and unlawful, or what L.I.F.E. Inc. would otherwise consider inappropriate, may not be sent through the agency's network. Computer users are prohibited from sharing their password with anyone else. Screensaver passwords must be on and with an activation of no longer than five (5) minutes. Employees whose user name or password may have been discovered by a third party need to immediately notify the Human Resources department to have it changed. Only authorized users may use the agency computers and network and must comply with agency policies, especially in reference to the HIPAA Privacy Rule and Security Provisions.

Employees are prohibited from loading any software of any kind on the agency's computers and that all diskettes, USB Clips, and CD-ROM's brought into the agency from an outside source (e.g. home computers, clients or co-workers) must be scanned for viruses by identified authorized agency personnel before any access takes place from an agency computer or server.

*Employees with access to an agency laptop will:*

- Use laptop for work purposes only
- Use password and screensaver protection
- Not allow unauthorized individuals to view agency related data
- Not use laptop on a non-L.I.F.E., public wireless channel
  - » Home wireless channel is acceptable with proper security settings
- Store laptop in an indoor, secure area
  - » If laptop is lost or damaged, employee should contact their program's Technology department representative immediately

*Employees who have an agency e-mail account on a hand held device will:*

- Use password protection
- Store hand held device in an indoor, secure area
- Not allow unauthorized individuals to view agency related data
- If hand held device is lost or damaged, contact Information their program's Technology department representative immediately

L.I.F.E. Inc's software is proprietary to the agency and many not be reproduced, downloaded, or distributed. Also, Living in Fulfilling Environments reserves the right to monitor all computer use and terminate any user's access to the computer or network at any time.

## Social Networking and Media

Living in Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.), Inc. takes no position on your decision to start or maintain a blog or participate in other social networking activities. However, it is the right and duty of the agency to protect itself from unauthorized disclosure of information. L.I.F.E. Inc.'s social networking policy includes rules and guidelines for agency-authorized social networking and personal social networking and applies to all agency employees.

### General Provisions

Blogging or other forms of social media or technology include but are not limited to video or wiki postings, sites such as Facebook and Twitter, chat rooms, personal blogs, or other similar forms of online journals, diaries or personal newsletters not affiliated with L.I.F.E. Inc.

Unless specifically instructed, employees are not authorized and therefore restricted to speak on behalf of L.I.F.E. Inc. Employees may not publicly discuss clients, employees, or any work-related matters, whether confidential or not, outside agency-authorized communications. Employees are expected to protect the privacy of L.I.F.E. Inc., its employees, and clients and are prohibited from disclosing personal employee and non-employee information and any other proprietary, financial, and nonpublic information to which employees have access.

### Employee Monitoring

Employees are cautioned that they should have no expectation of privacy while using the internet. Your postings can be reviewed by anyone, including L.I.F.E. Inc. The agency reserves the right to monitor comments or discussions about the company, its employees, and clients posted on the internet by anyone, including employees and non-employees. Employees are cautioned that they should have no expectation of privacy while using company equipment or facilities for any purpose, including authorized blogging. L.I.F.E. also reserves the right to use content management tools to monitor, review, or block content on company blogs that violate company blogging rules and guidelines.

### Reporting Violations

L.I.F.E. Inc. requests and strongly urges employees to report any violations - possible or perceived to supervisors, managers, or the Human Resources department. Violations include discussions of L.I.F.E. Inc. and its employees and clients, any discussion of proprietary information, and any unlawful activity related to social networking.

### Discipline for Violations

L.I.F.E. investigates and responds to all reports of violations of the social networking policy and other related policies. Violation of the company's social networking policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. Discipline or termination will be determined based on the nature and factors of any social networking post. L.I.F.E. reserves the right to take legal action where necessary against employees who engage in prohibited or unlawful conduct.

### Authorized Social Networking

When social networking or using other forms of web-based forums, L.I.F.E. must ensure that use of these

## Social Networking and Media

communications maintains our brand identity, integrity and reputation while minimizing actual or potential legal risks, whether used inside or outside the workplace.

## Rules and Guidelines

### Personal Blogs

L.I.F.E. Inc. respects the right of employees to write blogs and use social networking sites and does not want to discourage employees from self-publishing and self-expression. Employees are expected to follow the guidelines and policies set forth to provide a clear line between you as the individual and you as the employee.

L.I.F.E. Inc. respects the right of employees to use blogs and social networking sites as a medium of self-expression and public conversation and does not discriminate against employees who use these media for personal interests and affiliations or other lawful purposes.

Bloggers and commenter's are personally responsible for their commentary on blogs and social networking sites. Bloggers and commenter's can be held personally liable for commentary that is considered defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous by any offended party, not just L.I.F.E. Inc.

Employees cannot use employer-owned equipment, including computers or other electronic equipment, nor facilities or company time, to conduct personal blogging or social networking activities.

Employees cannot use blogs or social networking sites to harass, threaten, discriminate or disparage against employees or anyone associated with or doing business with L.I.F.E. Inc.

If you choose to identify yourself as a L.I.F.E. employee, please understand that some readers may view you as a spokesperson for L.I.F.E. Inc. Because of this possibility, we ask that you state that your views expressed in your blog or social networking area are your own and not those of the agency, nor of any person or organization affiliated or doing business with L.I.F.E. Inc.

Employees cannot post on personal blogs or other sites using the name, trademark, or logo of L.I.F.E. Inc. or any business with a connection to L.I.F.E. Inc. Employees cannot post agency-privileged information, including copyrighted information or company-issued documents.

Employees cannot post on personal blogs or social networking sites photographs of other employees, clients, nor can employees post photographs of persons engaged in agency business or at agency events.

Employees cannot link from a personal blog or social networking site to L.I.F.E. Inc.'s internal or external websites.

If contacted by the media or press about their post that relates to L.I.F.E. Inc. business, employees are required to speak with their manager before responding.

If you have any questions relating to this policy, your personal blog or social networking, ask your manager or supervisor.

## Policy

All Living in Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.) Inc. tablets and any accessories are provided primarily for business-related purposes. Attempts to change or eliminate any safeguards placed on agency tablets in order to use them for non-business related purposes or attempts to access inappropriate websites from the tablet will not be permitted. Only authorized users may use the agency tablets and must comply with agency policies, especially in reference to the HIPAA Privacy Rule and Security Provisions. Please utilize Form P08 (Agency Tablet Sign Out) to pass the tablet on to the next shift each day.

Employees are prohibited from attempting to load any software of any kind on agency tablets. L.I.F.E. Inc's software is proprietary to the agency and may not be reproduced, downloaded, or distributed. Also, Living in Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.), Inc. reserves the right to monitor all tablet use and terminate any user's access to the network at any time. If an app or program is needed on the tablet please contact a member of the IT Department who will take care of adding it to the agency tablet.

Agency tablets are to be used only at the program they were issued. No tablet should ever leave the premises for any reason. Agency tablets are equipped with safety and security features that make them inaccessible outside of a L.I.F.E. Inc. location. If the tablet is having technical issues a member from the IT Department should be contacted. Most issues can be evaluated remotely so there is usually no reason to bring the tablet to the office.